

GREAT AND SILENT THINGS.

How silently the years, in long procession,
Come gliding down the corridors of Time
to us!
Oh! quietly they come and take possession
Of our dear youth, and weigh us with oppression.
How great they seem, and how sublime
to us!

How softly Love into the heart comes
creeping—
How wonderfully low is her command at
last!
She wakes the soul that erstwhile lay
a-sleeping,
She dries the eyes that were but lately
weeping,
Revealing all her Promised Land at last.
And Death! Oh! with a velvet tread she
finds us,
And teaches us her awful lore and mys-
tery.
Like sheaves of wheat are we what time
she binds us,
And in a little sheet of whiteness winds
us—
And this is all of our poor history.

Oh! we who loudly cry our names in
chorus
Across the mighty years, shall sooner,
later,
Go humbly back upon the tide that bore us
To this brief life, as men have gone before
us,
Softly to God, silent to our Creator!
—Charles Hanson Towne, in S. S. Times.

Love or Duty?

By HARRY WHITTIER FREES

HE sat at his desk, staring at the
unchangeable evidence before him
of another's crime. It involved the
honor of a trusted man and the life-
long happiness of a loyal and loving
woman.

At the close of that day's business
the accountant had handed him the an-
nual statement of the bank's affairs.
It told of many things—the bank's
prosperity, its financial footing, and
ended with the grim awakening to con-
fidence misplaced. The cashier's ac-
count showed a shortage of ten thou-
sand dollars.

The face of the man at the desk
gleamed gray and haggard in the lamp-
light. As president of the institution he
was bound to protect his interests.
Policy alone demanded this man's
conviction and his punishment to the
limit of the law.

Such was duty.
But back of it all shone the faith
and happiness of a woman—the de-
fault of the wife. That spoken word
duty demanded as its God-given right
would condemn her to a lifelong heri-
tage.

His mind reverted back to those never-
to-be-forgotten days when he had
wooed this very woman—and had lost.
Tearfully and tenderly, with true wom-
anly compassion, she had told him of
another. With hope deadened to des-
pair he had accepted and respected her
decision, but God pity him! that love



"S SORRY I CALLED YOU NAUGH-
TY," SHE WHISPERED.

Lived on—undimmed, eternal. The in-
tervening years had only added to his
loneliness.

Such was love.
And now his must be the decision.
There could be no evasion. A man's
infamy and its punishment; a woman's
happiness and its protection.

Love or duty?
The watchman entering the room
aroused him.

"A lady at the door wishes to see
you," announced the man, hesitatingly.

"You told her that the rules forbade
admittance after banking hours?" he
asked, visibly annoyed.

"Yes; but she insisted, and seemed
sure that you would see her. She gave
me this."

He accepted the card mechanically.
A woman soliciting charity, no doubt.
The glance of indifference changed to
closest scrutiny and recognition.

God—his wife!
A moment later she stood timidly in
the doorway, holding a child by the
hand.

"You must pardon my intrusion at
this time," she began, appealingly—
and he caught the note of sadness in
her voice—"but I wished to see you
alone."

He bade her enter and be seated. At
sight of her, half-forgotten memories
flooded thick and fast. The dormant
blood of younger years leaped to his
heart with a sickening whirl. He noted
the calm, sweet face; a little older, per-
haps, but still the same. The child at
her side told of a new happiness—the
legacy of motherhood.

"I have come to see you about my
husband," she confessed, reluctantly.
"He has changed so greatly in the past
few months, that I thought perhaps it
might be his work; that you would un-
derstand."

mind over which he broods. Often
when I speak to him he does not hear
me. Then, again, he will look at me in
a way that makes my heart ache. Only
a few days ago I found him with our
little Dorothy in his arms, and the
tears were rolling down his cheeks. He
is always so loving and kind, I can't
understand—I—I—"

She was sobbing, and the man at the
desk felt something rise in his own
throat that choked him.

The child drew closer to its mother.
"Don't cry, mamma—dear mamma."
Suddenly the little figure straight-
ened up with firm resolve, and dar-
ed swiftly across the room, and the
at the desk became conscious of
little one at his knee.

"You're awful naughty to make me
dear mamma cry," she lisped, chokingly,
struggling bravely to keep back the
tears. "I don't like you."
"Come, Dorothy," called the mother,
gently, "you must not speak like that.
You don't mind baby, do you?" she
added, appealingly.

The man smiled sadly. "Mind her?
I'd as soon rebuke an angel."
For awhile he sat silent. He was
thinking how simple a matter it would
be to tell her all—how her husband's
conscience lashed him to remorse. How
simple, yet how despicable.

"I shall give the matter my atten-
tion," he said instead. "Perhaps your
husband is working too hard. His du-
ties as first cashier are especially oner-
ous. No doubt he needs a rest. I shall
speak to him about taking a few
weeks' vacation, and can almost prom-
ise you that he will soon be his old
self again."

She smiled her gratitude, relieved
and happy at his assurance. Suddenly
her face grew grave.

"My husband tells me frequently
how kind and considerate you have
been to him. Sometimes I can scarce-
ly fathom the nobility that prompts it,
for you could almost claim the right to
be otherwise—God knows you could!"

"Nan!" The old pet name of other
days swept impulsively from his lips as
he crossed the room. "I would do any-
thing to make you happy," he said, al-
most fiercely.

She looked up at him imploringly.
"Don't—please don't. I have no right
to listen."

He bowed his head resignedly before
her rebuke. "Forgive me. I had less
right to speak," he said.

She walked slowly away, and turn-
ing in the doorway, said, simply: "I
shall never forget your kindness. Good-
night."

The child hesitated as the mother left
the room, and a moment later the man
at the desk felt a little hand steal soft-
ly into his.

"It's sorry I called you naughty,"
came the penitent whisper, "'cause—
'cause mamma likes you. I likes you,
too. You may kiss me."

For one brief moment he caught the
child to his heart, and all the long-
ingness of his life was touched. He felt
the little arms clasp his neck in con-
fidence and love, and the touch of baby
lips.

"God bless you, baby!" he murmured,
brokenly.

The mother's voice calling the child
sounded softly from the outer room.

His head drooped lower over the
desk until it rested on his arm. All
the bitterness of his soul welled to his
lips. "Oh, God, what hast Thou denied
me!"

Through all the long hours of the
night he did not move. Visions of
"what might have been" came and
went. The watchman looked into the
room, and thinking that the bowed fig-
ure slept, moved silently away.

When the first gleam of dawn strug-
gled in at the window the man raised
his head. Opening a drawer of his desk
he took out a tiny locket. The fair
face of a woman smiled up at him
from its rim of gold. For a long time
he sat in silent contemplation of the
image, then with all the reverence of
his manhood he touched it with his
lips.

Love or duty?

Love.
That same day the first cashier was
called to the office of the president.

When he went back to his duties an
hour later there was a strange new
buoyancy in his manner.

Before the close of the day's busi-
ness the president had transferred ten
thousand dollars from his personal ac-
count to the bank's funds.

She never knew.—Farm and Fire-
side.

At His Own Words.

Not long ago the punishment for
libel in Russia was the requirement
that the libeler literally eat his own
words. A man who published a small
volume reflecting on the unlimited
power of the sovereign was seized,
tried in a summary way and con-
demned to consume the objectionable
words. In one of the public streets the
book was severed from its binding, the
margins cut off, the leaves rolled up
one by one and fed to the unfortunate
author. A surgeon was in attendance
to pronounce upon the number possi-
ble to give without endangering his
life, but he is reported to have set the
limit at something like 200.—N. Y.
Tribune.

Our Boys Should Learn.

To laugh; to run; to swim; to
carve; to be neat; to make a fire; to
be punctual; to do an errand; to cut
kindlings; to sing, if they can; to
help their mothers; to hang up their
hats; to respect their teachers; to hold
their heads erect; to sew on their own
buttons; to wipe their boots on the
mat; to speak pleasantly to older per-
sons; to put every garment in its
proper place; to remove their hats
upon entering a house; to attend strict-
ly to their own business; to be as
kind and helpful to their own sisters
as to other boys' sisters.—Woman's
Home Companion.

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